

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAB-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 SY-05 SCCT-01 OPR-02 A-01 SCS-03

SCA-01 DHA-02 /086 W

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R 171434Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7803

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JERUSALEM 0376

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, PINS, IS, JO

SUBJ: SHOTS INJURE THREE AS TENSION IN JERUSALEM, WEST BANK
MOUNTS

REF: JERUSALEM 0368

1. SUMMARY. THREE ARAB CHILDREN WERE SHOT DURING DEMONSTRATION
ON OUTSKIRTS OF JERUSALEM MARCH 17. PROTESTS CONTINUING
IN OLD CITY AND WEST BANK TOWNS, INCLUDING HEBRON. CURFEW
STILL IN EFFECT IN RAMALLAH AND BIREH. NABLUS LEADERS MEETING
TO CONSIDER FINAL ANSWER TO DEFMIN ON CITY COUNCIL
RESIGNATION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN MOST SERIOUS INCIDENT SINCE START OF CURRENT SERIES OF
DEMONSTRATIONS, THREE ARAB SCHOOL CHILDREN WERE INJURED IN
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JERUSALEM MARCH 17 WHEN SOLDIERS WHOSE CAR WAS SURROUNDED BY
CROWD OF STONE-THROWING STUDENTS APPARENTLY PANICKED AND

FIRE WEAPONS "FOR RESCUE PURPOSES." CAR WITH FOUR SOLDIERS WAS STOPPED STUDENTS ON ROAD TO JERICHO JUST OUTSIDE OF CITY NEAR ABU DIS. ONE 11 YEAR OLD UNDERGOING SURGERY AND IN CRITICAL CONDITION. OTHER TWO HOSPITALIZED BUT "LIVES NOT IN DANGER," ACCORDING TO ISRAELI RADIO.

3. DEMONSTRATIONS INSIDE JERUSALEM'S OLD CITY WERE BROKEN UP BY POLICE AND MILITARY, SEVERAL OF WHOM REPORTEDLY SLIGHTLY HURT BY ROCKS. TWENTY ARRESTED. GROUPS OF YOUTH BEING PREVENTED FROM CONGREGATING BY STEPPED-UP SECURITY PATROLS. OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS REPORTED IN KALANDIA, NORTH OF CITY, AND MOST SCHOOL CHILDREN STAYING AWAY FROM CLASSES IN EAST JERUSLAM. MANY OLD CITY SHOPS CLOSED MID-MORNING.

4. HEBRON AND NEARBY HALHUL WERE ALSO SCENE OF ROCK-THROWING PROTESTS MORNING OF MARCH 17, BUT ORDER REPORTEDLY RESTORED AS OF MIDDAY. STUDENTS STAGED SITDOWN IN MUNICIPALITY BUILDING IN BEIT SAHOUR BUT WERE EVICTED BY SECURITY FORCES. VIRTUALLY ALL SHOPS IN JERICHO CLOSED. RAMALLAH AND BIREH STILL UNDER STRICT CURFEW, WHICH WAS RELAXED FOR ONE OR TWO HOURS MARCH 16 TO PERMIT ESSENTIAL SHOPPING.

5. NABLUS SOURCE TELLS UP MUNICIPAL SERVICES OPERATING NORMALLY DESPITE ANNOUNCED RESIGNATION OF MAYOR AND OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS WHICH MILGOV REFUSING TO ACCEPT. THEY AND OTHER CITY NOTABLES WERE MEETING AGAIN ON MARCH 17 TO DECIDE ON ANSWER TO DEFMIN PERES WHO WE ARE INFORMED TOLD MAYOR AL-MASRI MARCH 16 THAT IF COUNCIL RESIGNATIONS NOT WITHDRWAN MILITARY ADMINISTRATOR WOULD BE APPOINTED FOR TOWN. ARABIC PRESS REPORTS PERES ALSO THREAT- ENED CANCELLATION OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN NABLUS.

6. CONFIRMING EARLIER INFO WE HAD BEEN GIVEN, JUSTICE MINISTER ZADOK TOLD ISRAELI RADIO INTERVIEWER IN HEBRON MARCH 17, WHERE HE WAS ATTENDING DEDICATION OF NEW COURTHOUSE, THAT DATE FOR HEARING APPEAL OF MAGISTRATE'S JAN 28 RULING ON JEWISH PRAYERS ON TEMPLE MOUNT WOULD BE SET BY JERUSALEM DISTRICT COURT ACCORDING TO NORMAL CALENDAR. HE REJECTED INTERVIEWER'S SUGGESTION THAT HEARING SHOULD BE GIVEN ANY SPECIAL PRIORITY.

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7. COMMENT. TENSION IN EAST JERUSALEM AND THROUGHOUT WEST BANK IS OBVIOUSLY VERY HIGH. ALTHOUGH MOST DEMONSTRATORS ARE YOUTHS, EMOTIONAL ISSUE OF WORSHIP ON TEMPLE MOUNT (HARAM-ESH-SHARIF) HAS CLEARLY AROUSED LATENT DISSATISFACTION WITH SITUATION UNDER OCCUPATION AMONG ARAB POPULATION GENERALLY. APPARENT ISRAELI DECISION TO LET APPEAL OF CONTROVERSIAL COURT RULING TAKE ITS NORMAL COURSE, AND HE HEARD PERHAPS ONLY MONTHS FROM NOW, APPEARS TO USE SHORTSIGHTED, SINCE QUICK REVERSAL OF RULING (WHICH IS GENERALLY PREDICATED BY ISRAELIS) WOULD SEEM MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR TRYING TO CALM SITUATION.

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